18.

A LAW AGAINST CUCKOLDOM: OR, THE TRYAL OF ADULTERY.

LONDON: Printed in the Year 1700.

A

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THE PREFACE.

CUCKOLDOM, that bugbear Misfortune, (in former Days, as terrible to a Courtier as his Prince's Frowns, and more dreadful to an old Citizen than Popery and Slavery) is now advanc'd to such Dignity, that it's crept into great Mens Families; and often becomes the serious Consideration of our grave Senate: and is so far from being thought Scandalous in this Age, that it's grown the most useful Liberty imaginable in a Married State, and serves, upon Occasion, to dissolve that Gordion-Knot, which the Priest so craftily tyes, to the Misfortune of many Thousands, who have unwarily fallen under the fatal Conjunction.

Were it not in a Womans power to recompence the Slavery of her servile Station, and revenge the Affronts, and cool Neglects, she is under a conjugal Necessity of enduring from her Husband, what charming Innocence, at Eighteen, would for the sake of Coach and Horses, or a plentiful Table, suffer an old wither'd Hand to crop the Flower of her Virginity, and waste her Youth and Beauty in the fruitless Embraces, and under the peevish Checks and Snubs of old Age, Jealousy, and Impotence? What can such a Compound of Infirmities, made an Eunuch in his Age by the Debaucheries of his Youth, expect from a Wife, possess'd of all the Charms and Perfections that can be lodg'd by Nature in blooming Juvenility? Which none but the powerful Nerves of a strenuous Lover is truly capable of enjoying.

Would Parents in the Disposal of their Children, but match 'em with as much care as they do their Dogs or Horses, it would, in a great measure, mutually preserve the State of Matrimony from any Adult'rous Invasion; For what true Northern Breeder will endure an old surfeited Jade, Spavin'd, Founder'd, and Wind-gall'd, to Leap his Hunting Favourite? Or suffer his fine shap'd Greyhound to Bastardise her Breed with an old mangy Mungril? Yet perhaps his handsome Daughter must be thrown away upon some old miserly Curmudgeon, who only Marrys to palliate his Gouty Pains, and cherish his feeble Carcass in the Winter of his Age, by her warm enlivening Touches, and counterfeit Embraces.

It is certainly an unnatural Imposition upon the fair Sex, to be thus disposs'd on; and though their worldly Interest, Obedience to Parents, or Importunities of Relations, may prevail upon 'em to put Nature in Masquerade, and seem to be well-pleased with their wrinkl'd Tumbler; yet, I do not question, but the poor young Bride, who labours under these Hardships, will soon find a way to communicate her Distress to some faithful Confident, who may, without any great Injury to his Conscience, at once gratify both the reasonable Desires of Youth, and justly reward the Folly and Lasciviousness of Age who desires to ingross that Blessing, to which (says the Law of Nature) no Priest can give

him

The Preface.

I'm an equitable Title; for if the Disproportion be so great as between Fifty and Fifteen, the Church may tye their Hands, 'tis true, but their Hearts are incapable of Union. I heartily pity that young Lady, who, either for want of Discretion in her Parents, or her self, has unhappily cast her Pearl before a Swine, who, knowing not how to use it, gives her just Provocation to dispose of the precious Jewel to him, who will convert it to its natural Employment; and to him that it's most Useful, be sure it will be most Valuable.

As to the following Poem, I shall say nothing of it in the Preface; but only hope, The Newness of the Subject, and the Pertinency of the Matter, will be sufficient to recommend it to an ingenious Reader: So having thought fit to give you this little Hint, I shall proceed to wind up the bottom of the Frontispiece, with a Concise Character of a Cornuted Fumbler.

A

CUCKOLD

IS an Artificial Monster, patch'd up between Action and Forbearance, who by his own Impotence, and his Wife's Incontinence, is soon brought to Perfection: If he be Jealous, he is always in search of that which he fears to find; if he be not, his Horns are generally visible to every body, but himself; he usually lays the Egg of his own Misfortune, and his Wife hatches it; his Fondness makes her Slighting; his ill Usage, makes her Revengeful; his Imprudence, makes her Cunning; his giving Opportunity, makes her improve it; his Negligence, makes her Mistrustful; and his Insufficiency, makes her Insatiate. There is generally a Mist between his Eyes and his Wife's Failings; he is either foolishly Fond, and can't see; or else prudently Patient, and won't see; he is very forward to asperse another with the same Calumny, and will, by no means, believe himself under the like Predicament, tho' he knows it to be true. If he carrys not his Wife to every public Entertainment, he thinks he breaks an Article of Matrimony: Thus leads her himself into the Path of Liberty, and is afterward Angry that she takes it. He is commonly more in Love with the Cuckoldmaker, than his Wife, and dare trust his Friend any where with her, and 'tis he that Cuckolds him. He's a Man of Note among both Sexes, and talk'd on more in the Parish where he lives, than the Parson; if he be a Trader, and his Wife be pretty, he's sure to have a good Trade, for he has one Commodity that helps off with the rest. He is either a good-natur'd Fool, or an ill-natur'd Knave; for Extreams in Fondness, or severe Usage, are the two main Causes of CUCKOLDOM.

A LAW AGAINST CUCKOLDOM: OR, THE TRYAL OF ADULTERY.

TOO weak are *Laws*, and *Edicts* Vain,
The hearts of *Women* to *Restrain*;
For when with happy Search they find
The Man they like, They still are kind,

So ſtrong, ſo daring is their Love,
It does ev'n fear of *Death* remove.
For proof of This, if others fail,
I now deſign to tell a Tale.

At *Prato*, once upon a Time,
Adultery was thought a *Crime* :
And every kind Conſenting *Wife*
Was doom'd by *Law* to loſe her life ;
So partial was this horrid *Act*,
It Equally Condemn'd the fact,
Whether the Cauſe was *pure deſire*
Or ſordid Gain and *ſinfull* Hire,
No ſooner did this *Edict* paſs,
But one *Rinaldo* found (alas)
His Wife *Phillipia*, Fam'd for Charms,
In Luſty *Lazarino's Arms* :
And with *Revenge* and Fury fill'd,
Twas Ten to One he both had kill'd ;
But eager paſſion he reſtrain'd,
The bold *Adultereſs* arraign'd,
And to the *Podeſtate* Complain'd.

The *Judge* for *Tryal* Nam'd the day,
And gave her time to ſlip away:
But ſhe reſolv'd to ſtand it out,
In vain her Kindred went about,
By dire Deſcriptions of the *Law*,
To fright and force her to withdraw.
She minded not a Word ſhe heard,
One would have ſworn, by what appear'd,
She thought her Fate would glorious prove,
To ſuffer *Martyrdom* for *Love*.

When ſolemn day of *Tryal* came,
In *Court* appear'd the *Guilty Dame*;
But lookt as Chearful, *Brisk* and *Gay*,
As thoſe that *Ogle* at a *Play*:
The *Judge* was in a horrid Fright,
(Toucht to the quick by Charms ſo bright)
Leſt ſhe the Matter ſhou'd Confeſs,
Her Caſe would then be paſt Redreſs.
You muſt be *Burnt*, *Madam*, he ſaid,
Your Spouſe has Information made,

That

That you were lately caught by him,
Committing the *forbidden Crime*
Adultery, and doubtleſs you
Have heard for this what *Death* is *Due*:
Conſider what you have to ſay,
And prudently your Anſwer weigh.

She ſaid, I freely own the Fact,
He caught me in the very Act;
With Joy the pleaſing Word I name;
For know, I *Glory* in my *Flame* :
And ſince my Paſſion did begin,
Have often try'd the *tempting Sin.*
For this you ſay I ought to Die;
But you know better, *Sir*, than I,
That Laws for Public Juſtice meant,
Should paſs by *General Conſent*;
And pray what *VVomen* did appear
To *Vote* for this? I ne'er could hear
Of one that lik'd it; and 'tis hard
They ſhould unjuſtly be debar'd

Their *Native* Right, by a *Decree*,
To which *They* never did agree:
On *us* alone, *Reſtraint* is lay'd;
Who are by bounteous Nature made
To give Content to more than One;
Which never yet by *Man* was done.
If Prejudice did not prevail,
Your ſolid Wiſdom cou'd not fail
For me this matter to decide,
And to declare the *Edict* void.
But, Sir, if *Death* muſt be my doom,
Soon let the *Welcome Minute* come;
Secure, I wait the fatal *Blow*;
Yet firſt an eaſy Favour ſhow:
Pray ask my *Huſband*, there he ſtands,
If all his *conjugal Demands*
Have not been anſwer'd ſtill by me,
With an *Exact Conformity*.

Rinaldo ſaid, I muſt Confeſs,
My *Wife* did ſtill *Comply* in This;

Inclin'd my Wish't Desires to *Grant*,
And Fond to satisfy my *Want*.

Observe, Sir, That, *Phillipia* said,
Whate're he wanted still he had;
Then wherefore, pray, this mighty Pother,
If I, to Gratify another,
Imploy'd the *useless* R*esidue*!
Pray, H*usband, what was that to you*?
I, like a *Charitable Fair*
Bestowing what I had to spare;
Believ'd it better to improve
My Growing *Overplus* of *Love*,
Than suffer Envious *Marriage Bands*
To keep it *Dead* upon my Hands.

Her speech so pleas'd the Listning Crowd,
They Clapt their Hands, and laught aloud.
Rinaldo durst no longer stay;
But hid his Face, and sneakt away:

And

And fair *Phillipia*, by her Art,
Sobrib'd the *court* to take her part,
So to her ſide the *Judge* did draw,
She ſav'd her ſelf, and *Damn'd the Law.*

FINIS.

Here is now Publiſh'd a Satyr againſt Marriage
Price 6 *d.*